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Department of Health and Family Services

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Date: March 12, 2003

BQA Memo 03-004

To:	Community Based Residential Facilities	CBRF - 01
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From: Susan Larsen, Interim Chief
Caregiver Regulation and Investigation Section

cc: Susan Schroeder, Director
Bureau of Quality Assurance

Wisconsin Nurse Aide Registry and Competency Testing Services Update

The Department of Health and Family Services, Bureau of Quality Assurance (BQA) is responsible for the approval and oversight of nurse aide training and testing in Wisconsin. Federal and state regulations require nurse aide training to include, at a minimum, at least 75 hours of training, of which at least 16 hours must be supervised practical training. The nurse aide competency evaluation must include two components: 1) a written or oral test and 2) a skill demonstration of randomly selected items drawn from a pool of tasks generally performed by nurse aides. Nurse aide students must successfully pass both components of the evaluation in order to be determined competent.

BQA is also responsible for the maintenance of the Wisconsin Nurse Aide Registry. The Registry is the list of nurse aides who, after completing an approved training program and successfully passing an approved competency evaluation test, meet federal and state requirements to work in Wisconsin health care facilities. Federal regulations require all states to keep such a Registry.

This memo is the latest in the series issued by BQA to provide an update on the Wisconsin Nurse Aide Registry and competency testing services through Promissor and contains important information on the following topics:

- Wisconsin Nurse Aide Registry Customer Service
- Internet-Based Nurse Aide Registry
- Interactive Voice Response (IVR)
- State-Administered Competency Testing

Wisconsin Nurse Aide Registry Customer Service

The **Wisconsin Nurse Aide Registry is available for customer service at 877-329-8760**. Promissor is responding to all Wisconsin Nurse Aide Registry callers and processing all Nurse Aide Registry forms. Promissor has generated and mailed over 7,300 Renewal notices for Wisconsin nurse aides whose Registry listing status would be more than two years old between October 1, 2002 through March 31, 2003.

Federal regulations require a nurse aide to work at least eight hours in a 24-month period, in a paid position providing hands-on care under the supervision of an RN or LPN, to maintain eligibility to work in a federally certified nursing home, intermediate care facility for persons with mental retardation, home health agency or hospice. Nurse aides working in one of these federally certified facilities should complete the Renewal form and have it signed by their employer, to verify the aides' most recent employment. To update the aide's Registry status, send the form to Promissor, PO Box 13785, Philadelphia, PA 19101-3785. The nurse aide will receive a new Wisconsin Nurse Aide Registry certificate and wallet card when the form is processed, indicating the new 24-month eligibility period.

Nurse aides and/or health care employers are encouraged to keep a copy of their completed Renewal form and to send the form to Promissor via certified mail. **The federally certified providers noted above may employ nurse aides if they verify the aides have met the paid, supervised work eligibility requirement, pending the Registry's update of the aides' status.**

BQA has received an increase in the number of calls from nurse aides who state their previous employers have refused to sign the Renewal form. The Renewal form is only to verify that a nurse aide worked the required hours under the supervision of an RN or LPN, not to guarantee the quality of the person's work. Accordingly, employers should not be reluctant to provide renewal documentation for any nurse aide, including those who have been terminated.

Attached, please find the Wisconsin Nurse Aide Registry Information form, intended for nurse aides currently listed on the Registry. Please provide this handout to nurse aides employed at your facility to relay important information about maintaining their Wisconsin Nurse Aide Registry status. It is recommended this form be provided to nurse aides upon initial hire and at the time of their annual in-service.

Nurse aides or health care providers who employ nurse aides should call the Wisconsin Nurse Aide Registry, toll-free (877) 329-8760 or check the website at www.promissor.com for information regarding:

- Nurse Aide Registry status
- Reporting a nurse aide's current address
- Nurse Aide Registry renewal process
- Nurse Aide Registry forms

Internet-Based Nurse Aide Registry

The Internet-based Wisconsin Nurse Aide Registry is available for access via Promissor's web address at www.promissor.com. For access, click on "Registry Services," scroll to "Wisconsin Nurse Aides," and select "Search the Nurse Aide Registry." A search can be conducted by the aide's last name, Social Security Number or Registration Number. Click on the nurse aide's Registration Number and the result can be printed for documentation purposes. The Internet-based Registry is available 24 hours per day, seven days per week.

The Internet text displays the aide's name, date of birth, date of inclusion, expiration date to verify eligibility for employment at federally certified facilities, the basis for inclusion on the Registry and whether a substantiated finding has been entered on the Caregiver Misconduct Registry. BQA has recently approved the updated text to display the aide's eligibility to work in specific facility types, as well as medication aide information.

Promissor's web-based Nurse Aide Registry has received approximately 61,000 "hits," confirming parties are querying individual nurse aide records.

The following information and forms are also available at www.promissor.com:

- Wisconsin Nurse Aide Candidate Handbook
- Application for Competency Evaluation
- Registry Out-of-State Application
- Change/Correction Form
- Registry Renewal Form
- Medication Aide Registry Application
- Regional Test Site and Schedule – 2003 (including test site codes)
- Practice Written Exam

Interactive Voice Response (IVR)

The **Wisconsin Nurse Aide Registry Interactive Voice Response (IVR)** is available at **877-224-0235**. The IVR may also be accessed 24 hours per day, seven days per week. A search can be conducted by the aide's Social Security Number or Registration Number. The current IVR script provides the aide's name, date of birth, date of inclusion, expiration date to verify eligibility for employment at federally certified facilities, the basis for inclusion on the Registry and whether a substantiated finding has been entered on the Caregiver Misconduct Registry. BQA has finalized the updated script to include the aide's eligibility to work in specific facility types, as well as medication aide information. Promissor's IVR has received approximately 6,100 calls to date.

Nurse Aide Competency Testing

If you are a nurse aide, training program, or health care provider who employs nurse aides, please call the **Wisconsin Nurse Aide Testing Services (WNATS) toll-free at (877) 290-3499** about:

- Nurse aide testing process
- Scheduling an examination (newly trained nurse aide candidates, nurse aides on the Registry who have not worked for a health care provider in the past 24 months, nurse aides on another state's Registry who have not worked in the past 24 months, etc.)
- Applying to be a nurse aide evaluator
- Applying to be a regional or in-facility test site

Approximately **100 nurse aide evaluators located throughout Wisconsin** have been approved to administer Promissor's standardized National Nurse Aide Assessment Program™ Examination. Approved evaluators have completed orientation for meeting neutral, objective and secure testing standards.

14 regional test sites are established throughout the state. Regional test site locations and schedules can be found at www.promissor.com. WNATS schedules a candidate for testing at the regional site closest to the candidate's home address. If the candidate wishes to test at a site in another location, that information should be included on the application.

Approximately 65 in-facility test sites have also been approved. An in-facility test site is generally a facility that sponsors a nurse aide training program and has been approved for competency test administration. WNATS contacts the training program after receiving applications from the facility for candidates who have completed training to arrange a mutually acceptable date and time for testing.

As provided in section HFS 129.08(2)(b)2, Wis. Admin. Code, the written or oral test is provided in English, unless the candidate is or will be employed in a provider setting in which the predominant language is other than English. The test may then be offered in that predominant language used in the facility. **Candidates who wish**

the test to be administered orally, in another language, or who require a special accommodation must identify those needs when applying. These requests may require more time for scheduling.

Promissor currently administers nurse aide competency tests in 24 states. **Wisconsin nurse aide candidates have passed the competency tests administered by Promissor at a higher rate than nurse aide candidates in most other states during the similar start-up period.** Between November 23, 2002 and February 28, 2003, 716 nurse aide candidates have completed the standardized National Nurse Aide Assessment ProgramTM Examination. The average pass/fail statistics for this period indicate 98 percent of the candidates successfully passed the written exam, 93 percent passed the oral exam and 78 percent passed the skills exam. The skill exam pass rate has steadily increased from 69 percent in November 2002 to 80 percent in February 2003.

The nurse aide evaluator may not cue, prompt or answer questions once the evaluation has begun. Candidates are allowed one opportunity during each skill to self-correct a mistake during the demonstration. Most candidates who do not successfully pass the skills evaluation are verbalizing the skill instead of actually performing the skill, or they are failing to perform the skill as described in the Nurse Aide Candidate Handbook. The skills with the highest failure rate include:

- Perineal care
- Taking and recording pulse and respiration
- Range of Motion

For more information about nurse aide training, testing and the Registry, including the recently posted “**Nurse Aide Testing and Registry Frequently Asked Questions,**” please see the Department’s web site at [**www.dhfs.state.wi.us/caregiver/index.htm**](http://www.dhfs.state.wi.us/caregiver/index.htm).

Other Questions or Comments

Please contact the Caregiver Regulation and Investigation Section (CRIS), if you have questions about:

- Federal or state nurse aide requirements
- Caregiver misconduct reporting requirements
- Substantiated findings on the Caregiver Misconduct Registry
- Caregiver background checks

CRIS recently moved to a new location. Please note the following address change:

**Caregiver Regulation and Investigation Section
Bureau of Quality Assurance
2917 International Lane, Suite 300
Madison, WI 53704
Telephone: (608) 243-2019
e-mail: Caregiver_Intake@dhfs.state.wi.us
FAX: (608) 243-2020**

Attachment